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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 000490

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: ITALY/MEPP: A READ OUT OF THE EU JANUARY COMEP MEETING

REF: SECSTATE 04154

CLASSIFIED BY: POL MINISTER-COUNSELOR THOMAS COUNTRYMAN FOR REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D)

1. (C) SUMMARY: DURING THE JANUARY MEETING OF THE EU COMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS (COMEP) IN BRUSSELS, THE WORKING GROUPS DISCUSSED THE QUARTET'S ROADMAP AND FUTURE MONITORING MECHANISM, AND THE GREEK PRESIDENCY DISTRIBUTED TO THE INDIVIDUAL EU STATES OUR NON-PAPER ON THE OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF PALESTINIAN REJECTIONIST GROUPS IN DAMASCUS (REFTEL.) END SUMMARY.

ROADMAP: MIXED FEELINGS

2. (C) NEA WATCHER MET LUCA FRATINI, THE MFA'S DEPUTY OFFICER DIRECTOR FOR THE ARAB MED COUNTRIES TO GET A READ-OUT OF THE EU COMEP JANUARY MEETING IN BRUSSELS. FRATINI, WHO ATTENDED THE MEETING AS THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GOI, SAID THAT THE EUROPEANS EXPRESSED THEIR DISAPPOINTMENT THAT THE ROADMAP WAS NOT PUBLISHED ON DEC. 20. NONETHELESS, THE MERE FACT THAT THE QUARTET MEETING TOOK PLACE ON DEC. 20 WAS PERCEIVED AS A SUCCESS AND SO WAS THE PERSONAL SUPPORT THAT PRESIDENT BUSH IS GIVING THE QUARTET AND THE ROADMAP DESPITE HIS PREOCCUPATIONS WITH IRAQ, SAID FRATINI.

MONITORING MECHANISM

3. (C) AT THE COMEP MEETING, FRATINI EXPRESSED HIS GOVERNMENT'S WISH TO SEE A SMALL AND EFFICIENT MONITORING MECHANISM WITH A COORDINATION COMMITTEE COMPOSED OF EACH OF THE FOUR QUARTET MEMBERS PLUS A REPRESENTATIVE OF EACH OF THE FOUR SPECIALIZED GROUPS (POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SECURITY, AND PALESTINIAN REFORM.) FRATINI NOTED THAT THE CURRENT STAFFING PATTERN OF THE SPECIALIZED GROUPS IS UNSATISFACTORY. THE COMEP AGREED TO ADDRESS IN FUTURE MEETINGS INCREASING THE LEVEL OF EU CONTRIBUTION TO THE SPECIALIZED GROUPS.

PALESTINIAN REJECTIONIST GROUPS IN DAMASCUS

4. (C) THE GREEK PRESIDENCY CIRCULATED OUR NON-PAPER ON THE OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF PALESTINIAN REJECTIONIST GROUPS IN DAMASCUS (REFTEL.) AMB. ANTONIO BADINI, THE MFA'S DG FOR MIDDLE EASTERN AFFAIRS, WILL RAISE REFTEL CONCERNS WITH SYRIAN FM AL-SHARAA DURING HIS OFFICIAL VISIT TO SYRIA FEB 8-11, SAID FRATINI.
SEMBLER

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